The MEANING OF THE MINNEAPOLIS TRIALS

Speakers:

V. R. DUNNE

Organizer Local 544 — CIO Leading Defendant Minneapolis "Sedition" Trial.

PAUL RICHIE

California State Assemblyman, San Diego.

DR. C. J. TAFT

Director American Civil Liberties Union, Southern California Branch.

EMBASSY AUDITORIUM

— SOUTH HALL —

517 WEST NINTH STREET

●

SUNDAY MAY 3 - 8 P.M.

Admission 25c

Auspices: **CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE**

CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE
160 Fifth Ave. New York

Jan. 21, 1942

TO ALL LOCAL COMMITTEES:

NATIONAL TOUR OF V. R. DUNNE

V. R. Dunne has consented to make a national tour under the auspices of the CRDC. Vincent Dunne, 544-CIO Executive Board member and one of the 18 convicted in the Minneapolis case is, as you know, one of the best known labor leaders in the Northwest.

His tour is scheduled to start on Monday, February 2nd in Milwaukee, and he will visit 22 cities by March 15th. Enclosed is a tentative schedule of his entire tour. This is the first national tour that Vincent Dunne has been able to make and the CRDC is exceptionally fortunate to have him available as a speaker. We hope every local committee will take full advantage of his visit. He will speak on "The Meaning of the Minneapolis Case."

In addition to arranging public and private meetings, banquets, luncheons, etc. for him under the auspices of the CRDC or other organizations, local committees should make special efforts to have him appear at local union meetings, executive boards, or to meet with union officers to discuss the Minneapolis case with them and enlist their material and moral support. Follow up any contacts you may have made in unions for this purpose.

We have just received word through Roger Baldwin of the ACLU that Lee Pressman, CIO National Counsel, has assured him that the National CIO will participate in the appeal of the Minneapolis convictions by filing briefs as "friend of the court." This official recognition of the significance of the case to the CIO and the labor movement should facilitate this part of your work.

While we are setting no fixed amounts to defray the expenses of V. R. Dunne's tour, we rely upon each local committee to bear its share of the expense. With proper preparation we believe that all local committees can not only raise his tour expenses but also contribute a sizeable sum toward the CRDC Appeal Fund.

We are enclosing an acceptance form for the tour. Will you send us the information requested without delay so that we can perfect our plans. Please remember that only slight changes can be made.

Sincerely yours,

George E. Novack
Secretary

New York, New York
January 22, 1942

Dear Ray,

I cannot tell you how pleased I am to know that you are going to be able to make the CRDC tour. This will be a great thing, both for the defense and the party branches which you will visit. Not least in importance is the treat which it will be for you, and it is a pleasure which you richly deserve.

Your tentative schedule has been arranged so that you will have a rest period at intervals along the route. I sincerely hope that you will utilize this arrangement to protect yourself against the wear and tear of such a trip.

There are a number of things which I want to communicate to you, but since you will be here in a few short weeks, I will mention only a few items in this letter. The rest we will leave for more adequate and satisfactory discussion upon your arrival here.

The copy of the letter from the South was received. There are also letters to other individuals here and a long document from Munis. Jim has been advised of every development. We will not make these developments known to anyone except the leading comrades until we hear from Jim and the whole situation becomes better clarified. As you will realize, there are many complications involved. By the time you arrive here there will be sufficient developments to have a real discussion on the situation.

Some criticism has arisen in the P.C. about the policy on the Militant. The indications are that while all members voted for the present line when it was recommended, some favored the decision without understanding the full motivation. These individuals apparently approved the recommendations because they thought a wild wave of hysteria and immediate repressions were certain. Now that things have developed somewhat differently and we seem less vulnerable than we had at first thought, these comrades now seem to want to return to the old status quo and make no changes until hysteria and repression do arrive.

We are getting out a document to the N.C. members, giving a full picture of the present policy and the reasons for it, along with a criticism of the line that some now propose. This should reach you before you leave on your tour.

Reba is collecting the back numbers of the press which you requested, and will send them out soon. A great deal of this material is now over at the binders where the new sets of bound

volumes are being prepared. This will cause some delay, but she will do her best to give you prompt action. Please arrange for Reba to be notified direct of any libraries who want to be placed on the complimentary mailing list for the Militant and F.I. and she will take care of this.

I don't think of anything else right now that can't wait until you get here. In view of the fact that you will be in New York quite a bit while you are touring this immediate section of the country, we should be able to have many pleasant hours together.

As ever,

Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 3, 1942

Farrell Dobbs
116 University Place
New York City, New York

Dear Farrell:

I trust that by this time you and the particular friend you came here to see have found a way to straighten out the immediate future for our friend. His brother no doubt has already arrived and again I express the hope you have some how together found a way to help him out in this matter also.

The Louisville contact turned out to be a most excellent friend. Harry will no doubt let you read my communication to him about the work done there. I will not be over emphasizing the work done in Louisville if I say that neither the letter to Harry nor this brief communication begins to do justice to the intelligence and consistent efforts that have been made by our new friend there.

The prospects for an active club in Louisville are now more than excellent. Fred has any number of close intimate contacts, he is working every day with six or eight very fine young people, most of them active in the labor movement in one way or another. Many of these young people I know will find a way with the help of our new friend to become a part of our organization.

I secured his agreement without any difficulty whatsoever to communicate with you and submit his application. I recommend an immediate acceptance and active correspondence with him.

As he will no doubt inform you he is the leading figure in the textile workers joint board as the organizer. He has been elected to this post by the ranks of the unions involved and holds his position in the trade union movement therefore on the very best possible basis.

I also saw while in Louisville in addition to many other people our new friend and his friends put me in contact with, our mutual friend of long ago who organized the teamsters union there. He was very friendly and helped me out a bit financially towards my expenses and offered to try to get a substantial fund to send into the defense committee.

I will be leaving for the western part of the tour now in a few days but hope I can hear from you before I leave. I have not as yet received any contact list from Jules. I am writing him of course and reminding him about this lack. Is it possible for you to check with him and see that I don't lack the most important contacts that we have in the western part of the country.

Thank you Farrell, best personal wishes and regards to you and all the friends.

V. R. Dunne

V. R. Dunne

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CIVIL RIGHTS DEFENSE COMMITTEE

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Chairman

JOHN DOS PASSOS
Vice-Chairman

CARLO TRESCA
Vice-Chairman

GEORGE NOVACK
Secretary

February 8, 1942

Farrell Dobbs
116 University Place
New York City

Dear Farrell:

I have received, upon my arrival in Chicago, a complte list of the contacts for the CRDC in the various points that I will make on this tour. I don't know whether you have had time to consider the matter or not, but I think it would be a good idea for you to make up a list of Club contacts in the various cities that I will reach for my information and use in addition to the list that I have from George's office. I don't know that there are differences but I assume that there probably are different names and addresses, important from the Club point of view, that I could reach and will fail to find, included in the list of CRDC.

I am sure that you have my itenary and will therefore be able to judge as to where and when to forward such a list and any other pertinent information that you think would be timely, or would be of assistance for me for the Clubs generally. In Chicago we have been quite successful, even though with limited time, in making a number of contacts that will undoubtedly increase the breadth and scope of the CRDC work here. Chicago friends have really done a marvelous job in getting out into live mass movements, particularly the CIO organizations and have made many important friends in strategic positions in this big and growing movement. This has been done, naturally, not only for the CRDC, although it has yielded important results in this field, but also for the general work of our friends here in the wider field of trade union efforts. Harold and I have called on several people today who responded very well and are unquestionable friendly in a serious way, naturally not in full political support. Jack R., Harold and I will call on one or two others to give greetings and thanks for past favors with an attempt to consolidate the relationships, etc, etc. Tonight we have a meeting of the CRDC Committee of all those who can possibly attend on short notice and will have a discussion and a report before I leave for Flint.

I am mailing you a clipping from the Chicago press which will be very interesting to you. It seems that the pleasant, friendly relationships between Mr.

Keeshin and our friend John have been strained beyond patchwork efforts. Keechin, I would judge from the press report, is in a rather uncomfortable position, having been accused in open court of procuring the assault upon our friend John, with a distinctly unfriendly implication, to put it mildly.

Really I have no possibility of delving in this thing, nor have I much desire to do so but I will keep my ear cocked to try to find out what the internal angles of this matter amount to.

Friends in Minneapolis and St. Paul have mailed me a copy of one of the latest communications from the south which does not indicate any change in the attitudes or viewpoints there. I look forward eagerly to a discussion with you and other friends on this whole question and I know that you willlfurnish me from time to time with any information that can help me keep abreast of any developments along this line.

You probably already have been advised of the election that we won at the Waterman-Waterbury Company. This was an extremely important and significant move for us in the local union situation there and has already called forth sharp reactions from Tobin, who is more disturbed, if that is possible, than he was at the time of our break to go to the CIO. The winning of this election, 2 to 1, under the threats and pressure of Tobin's Neill and the complete command of the Tobin machine in the local truck drivers movement, means to Tobin and to those who follow him that with all the slander, mud, intimidations, and aid from the city, state, and national governments, notwithstanding, the men in the union still are willing to brave the terrors of the club, if they only have a slight chance to vote the way they think and come over to the union with a program and leadership that will give them some rights.

It does not follow necessarily, of course, rather to the contrary, that we will go from one election to another and finally take over the union, but it does mean that we are not out of the fight even on a union basis in Minneapolis, far from it, as I see it now.

You probably know that my schedule has been switched a bit; that I only spend two days in Chicago, leaving either tonight or tomorrow morning early for Flint where the friends have arranged an appearance before some CIO body there that they consider very important and that I, or we, in turn must view in the same way. I also, according to this change in schedule will come directly from Boston to Newark, N.J. to attend a CIO union official luncheon there on February 28. Then go back to New Haven, and later return to New York and New Jersey for more ex tensive working of that territory. It will be at this time, I presume, that we will have the possibility of going over many matters that need serious attention, and I suppose lengthy discussions.

I am sending a copy of this communication to Jim and to some responsible comrades in Minnesota. I trust you are hearing from Jim

right along and keeping him informed about developments in all fields, as a matter of fact, I know that that is the case and therefore I do not worry unnecessarily about such things.

It has occured to me that you might give George a little assistance in the consideration of the problems raised by Baldwin in his recommendations for contact with and possibly also to some national CIO officials in connection with our case. Having said this, I begin to feel that I was lecturing you. I know that is not necessary, but thought there may be a possibility of your not being completely familiar with some of the angles on the case and wanted to call to your attention and to indicate that that is one of the reasons why I am mailing you a copy of the letter from George, including some of these proposals in outline. I don't know whether or not I sent you a copy of the letter that I addressed to Denny Lewis in Washington a few days before I left Minnesota. At any rate, I wrote a friendly letter to him thanking him for his assistance all along the line and for his interest in the continuation of the fight and the appeal, etc., etc. I ~~think~~ then asked him for a friendly letter, informal if he chose, saying that he knew me and introducing me to any one that might be considered a mutual friend. I have not received any reply from him but inasmuch as I left Minneapolis a few short hours after the letter was dispatched, that may not be surprising. In any case such a letter as I addressed to him could only have the effect of assuring him of my personal and our general friendlyness to him and relieve him of any doubts that he might possibly have that we harbored some resentment for the lack of big funds that we at one time thought might be available through him. I say this so that you will understand that any further approach to him, if it is feasible, will not be an approach without any previous contact.

I don't think that it is indicated now that I will raise any money on this trip, but I am sure that the work that can be done in bringing to the attention of friends in the mass movement and otherwise, the importance of continuing efforts for our cause will be productive of good results in the near future. There is no doubt that I will be able to finance the trip and perhaps a little more along the way but the national office of the CRDC cannot rely upon any significant contributions from city to city that will weigh heavily in the balance as against the big fund that we must necessarily collect before April 1. The CRDC committies and friends will, I venture to think, be at least somewhat aided and inspired by the very fact that a well-known worker is touring for the CRDC and this, in my opinion, will aid greatly in continuing the work in a period when there seems to be from a public standpoint, no very great interest.

I will be expecting to hear from you, Farrell, within the next few days and will write you again at the first opportunity. Our mutual friend and faithful worker, Bertha, is here in town from Kansas and has every intention and good prospect of staying here indefinitely now. According to latest information she will go to work in Chicago and will be an important addition to the Chicago organization. She has very kindly extended her efforts and her time to get off this communication and several others that I have to get out, and is working closely with the Chicago comrades.

Dave informs me that he will probably be called for important service in the big world effort in the next few days. I don't know whether he is entirely sure about the time of his leaving and I assume that he will notify you of any definite developments or orders that he receives. In the light of this we must be thinking about the problem of the Chicago organization, but I think you and I both agree that will not be complicated irreparibly by this development. Also Zander reported last night that he is very liable to be called away immediately. Today, however, information is that there may be a delay here. I say this only to indicate that some of our people here will be leaving us and that we should be therefore, all the more appreciative of the fact that such friends as Bertha and others are available to take over and help to continue the work.

Give my personal regards and love to all of the friends that I know there and say that I look forward to being in New York for two or three days or more and in the not too distant future. Thank you, Farrell, for your aid in helping to arrange things for this tour. I willbe seeing you and will write you again along the route.

VRD:lr

Vincent